1: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 195 AE9 Monguor AE9

hunted in the forests of Hsimi. This animal has the habit of making and following a small beaten trail along which it goes always to the same place to drop its dung—which is done regularly at the same time of day—and to rub itself against small trees. When such a trail has been found the hunter studies it carefully to determine the best place to attach a running noose to a small tree, which is then bent over and attached to a stake in such a manner that when the deer, going along the trail, puts its head in the noose, the stake is knocked aside, the tree springs up, and the more the deer struggles the more quickly it is strangled. The hunter lies hidden watching the trap and the moment the deer is caught he rushes out with a knife to cut out the precious musk pod, which is on the surface of the stomach, near the genitalia. It is believed that the pod must be cut out immediately because otherwise the blood inside the pod will be absorbed into the body of the animal, and the "virtue" of the musk will be lost.

The musk-deer hunters admit that adulteration of this valuable commodity begins the moment that the animal is caught. Musk pods are sold by weight, and therefore as soon as he has cut out the pod the hunter stuffs it with blood and shredded liver from the deer in order to increase the weight. It is seldom that one can buy unadulterated musk in the shops of the Chinese dealers, because in addition to what is done by the hunters themselves to increase the weight, no one knows what the dealers add.

Although the lamas and most (though not all) Mongols abhor the eating of fish, considering that taking the lives of the fish is a sin that will affect the sinner's next incarnation, the Monguors do engage in considerable fishing in Kukunor.[7] As soon as the lake has frozen in winter, small expeditions go from the Monguor country to the lake. Such an expedition lasts for about two months, and the Monguors are back by New Year's Eve of the lunar calendar, which comes usually toward the end of February or the beginning of March. The Monguors go first to see the chief of the Mongol or

[7] Kukunor, the "Azure Lake," is 230 miles in circumference, at an altitude of 10,900 feet above sea level. (W. W. Rockhill, *The land of the lamas*, 120, New York, Century, 1891.) The water is salty. Two rivers run into the lake, the bottom of which is covered with sand and small stones. One big island rises out of the water and is inhabited by a few lamas, who only in wintertime, when the lake is frozen, can come ashore, since no boats are used on the lake. At that time the Tibetans drive horses and sheep to the island in order that they may graze and breed; colts and lambs bred on the island are assumed to be a blessing for the herds. The famous *Ch'ien-li-ma* (horses which are reputed to run 1,000 *li* or approximately 300 miles in one day) celebrated as long ago as the Han dynasty, are said to be bred on the island, whose grass is reputed wonderfully nutritive for animals. There are three kinds of fishes in the lake, where fish are plentiful: *schizopygopsis przewalskii*, *schizopygopsis leptocephalus*, and *schizopygopsis gracilis*. They weigh from three to five and seven pounds (Przewalskii, *Reisen in der Mongolei, in das Gebiet der Tanguten und den Wüsten Nordtibets*, 140, Jena, 1873).

Tibetan tribe on the shore of the lake from whose territory they plan to operate; making him a present of the traditional ceremonial scarf of felicity and a cask of wine, some tobacco, and noodles. They are then given the chief's permission and the protection of the tribe. The men of each fishing expedition usually go to the same territory every year and become sworn brothers of the chief or of some important local nomad, in order to make sure that while they are camped by the lake they will be allowed to gather fuel and will have no animals stolen.

Each fisherman breaks a hole in the ice, and spreads a couple of sheep skins on which he sits crosslegged, a two-pronged fork in his hands, waiting for fish to come to the surface of the water. The fish is harpooned with the fork and thrown on the ice. The frozen fish are either carried to market, usually at the city of Hsining, by the Monguors themselves or sold to Muslim merchants who make up caravans of twenty or thirty mules or donkeys. These expeditions involve hard work and exposure to the bitter cold, but the business must be remunerative as many Monguors go year after year.

TRADE

In the territory inhabited by the Monguors trade, transport, and small industries are mostly in the hands of Chinese and Muslims. The Muslims are an energetic and enterprising people, even more hard working and indefatigable than other Chinese. They willingly engage in the arduous work of driving caravans of pack-mules and in running rafts and boats down the Hsining and Upper Yellow Rivers in all weathers. Most of the peddlars are also Muslims, who travel either with a pack on their backs or with a loaded donkey, wandering through the Monguor country from house to house, exchanging cloth, needles, thread, and other small wares for wool, skins, eggs, and grain. In the autumn, Muslim buyers collect sheep and oxen and drive them to Hsining in small herds.

There are very few Chinese peddlars, but the distilleries and flour and oil mills, which require money capital, are run by Chinese, and the Chinese monopolize the pork business, since the Muslims will have nothing to do with pigs. All through the year, and especially during the autumn, while the Muslims are buying up other livestock the Chinese butchers of the cities and towns send their agents into the Monguor villages to buy hogs. The Chinese merchants who do business on a bigger scale than the Muslim peddlars also send their representatives to pitch tents and display their wares at such large gatherings as the lama monastery festivals and the annual meetings of the Monguor clans.

Grain and oil seeds, being the main crops of the Monguors, are also the main commodities of trade. The conversion of grain into alcohol and of oil seeds into oil results in products of higher value in proportion to bulk and weight which can stand the cost of transporta-

/The Monguors/

N *563 M 233 463 [466]

because of the value of the animals entrusted to them. They are skillful in breeding, and in finding the best pasture. A shepherd is treated as a member of his employer's family; he receives the same food, and the daughters-in-law must show him the same respect they accord to the head of the family.

N *563 M 224 439

The Mongours hunt foxes, hares, pheasants and musk deer, using guns, traps and poison. The fox skins are sold to Chinese merchants and the best skins, used for lining the winter garments of the rich, bring a handsome price. Musk deer are also valuable game. The precious musk glands, used as a special drug or as an essence in perfume, are sold by weight to Chinese dealers.

N *563 M 226

Fishing is important in Koko Nor, where the lake produces an abundant supply. Mongour expeditions go there as soon as the lake has frozen over each winter. They go first to the chief of the Mongol or Tibetan tribe on whose shore they plan to operate, and present gifts such as wine, tobacco, noodles and the traditional ceremonial scarf of felicity in exchange for permission to fish and protection from the tri[illegible]. The fishermen usually go to the same territory every year, [illegible] become sworn brothers of the chief or some important local nomad. The expedition, which lasts about two months, involves hard work in the bitter cold, but the profits are sufficient reward. Preservation of the fish is no problem; they freeze immediately after they are caught. They are carried to the market in Hsi-ning, or sold to Moslem merchants who engage in caravan trade.

M [251]

N *563 M 438 439

Mongours carry on their trade largely with Chinese and Chinese Moslem merchants. The Moslems are an energetic and enterprising people who drive caravans of pack mules from house to house in the Mongour country, exchanging cloth, needles and thread for wool, skins, eggs and grain. In the autumn they collect oxen and sheep and drive them in small herds to Hsi-ning. The Chinese merchants do business on a larger scale. They send their representatives to pitch tents and display their wares at lama monastery festivals and at the annual celebrations and meetings of the Mongour clans. During the fall, when the Chinese Moslems are buying up sheep and oxen, the Chinese butchers of the cities send their agents to the Mongour villages to buy hogs. Chinese merchants also send their buyers into Mongour country for wool and skins, going from home to home. There are also peddlers, who deal largely in items needed in the Mongour home, such as needles, colored thread, cotton cloth, cheap jewelry, sugar and pipe tobacco. Business is always by barter, with the top-ranking woman of the Mongour household doing the bargaining. As the peddler travels a long distance, it is customary to provide him with a place to sleep. Before he leaves he presents the hostess with a small token of apprecia-

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